

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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R 171731Z AUG 78
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INFO AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y F O R P A R A T W O

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT PE
SUBJ: CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY DEVELOPMENTS

REF: LIMA 7244

SUMMARY: THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY'S THIRD MEETING FUNCTIONED AS A PLATFORM FOR POLEMICAL ORATORY, LITTLE OF WHICH DEALT WITH THE INTERNAL RULES OF ORDER. AFTER SEVEN HOURS OF DEBATE, ONLY ONE ARTICLE HAD BEEN APPROVED. THE PCP THREATENED TO WITHDRAW FROM THE ASSEMBLY IF ARTICLE 37 IS APPROVED IN ITS CURRENT FORM. END SUMMARY.

2. THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY MET AUGUST 14, AND, AFTER ALMOST SEVEN HOURS OF DEBATE, APPROVED ARTICLE 34 OF THE INTERNAL RULES OF ORDER, 62 TO 27. ARTICLE 34 STATES (UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION): IN ALL DEBATE, THERE WILL BE ON THE TABLE, A LIST OF THE REPRESENTATIVES WHO WISH TO SPEAK, IN THE ORDER IN WHICH THEY HAVE SOLICITED THE FLOOR. THE MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY
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CAN INFORM THEMSELVES, THROUGH THE SECRETARY, AT WHATEVER MOMENT, OF THE LIST OF SPEAKERS.

2. THE DELAY IN THE APPROVAL OF THIS RELATIVELY SIMPLE ARTICLE WAS CAUSED BY PROLONGED DISCUSSIONS ON ISSUES IRRELEVANT TO THE MATTER AT HAND - THE APPROVAL OF THE INTERNAL RULES OF ORDER. DURING THE NIGHT OF POLEMICS, GENERAL LEONIDAS RODRIGUEZ

FIGUEROA (PSR) ASKED THAT HIS ROLE IN THE VELASCO GOVERNMENT BE STUDIED BY THE INVESTIGATIVE COMMISSION. ISIDORO GAMARRA (PCP DELEGATE AND PRESIDENT OF THE COMMUNIST LABOR CONFEDERATION, CGTP), WITH TEARS IN HIS EYES, DESCRIBED AT LENGTH HIS LIFE AS A TRADE UNIONIST AS THE LEFT VOICED ITS SUPPORT FOR THE STRIKING MINERS. FINALLY, AS MIDNIGHT APPROACHED, HAYA DE LA TORRE REQUESTED THAT THE REPRESENTATIVES SHORTEN THEIR SPEECHES IN ORDER THAT THE ASSEMBLY COULD APPROVE THE RULES OF ORDER IN THE SHORTEST TIME POSSIBLE. HE NOTED THAT THE LONG DEBATE WAS IMPEDING THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE ASSEMBLY. SHORTLY AFTERWARDS ARTICLE 34 WAS APPROVED. THE ASSEMBLY'S NEXT MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR AUGUST 18.

3. DURING THESE DEBATES, THE PCP THREATENED TO WITHDRAW FROM THE ASSEMBLY IF ARTICLE 37 IS APPROVED AS IT NOW READS (UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION):

AT THE REQUEST OF THE CHAIR, OR OF AT LEAST TEN REPRESENTATIVES, THE ASSEMBLY MAY DECLARE ANY POINT SUFFICIENTLY DEBATED. IN THIS CASE, THE PRESIDENT WILL PUT TO THE VOTE THE QUESTION DISCUSSED.

ACCORDING TO PCP DELEGATES, THE ARTICLE IS ANTI-DEMOCRATIC. IT WAS FINALLY DECIDED THAT ARTICLE 37 WOULD BE FURTHER DISCUSSED IN COMMITTEE. THE PCP THREAT, MADE AFTER A NUMBER OF ATTENTION GETTING SPEECHES, IS UNLIKELY TO HAVE MUCH SUBSTANCE. HOWEVER, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ITS POSITION ON ARTICLE 37 IS INDICATIVE OF THE MINORITY LEFT'S DESIRE TO USE THE ASSEMBLY PRIMARILY FOR ATTACKS ON THE GOVERNMENT AND TO DELAY ITS TAKING UP THE DRAFTING OF THE CONSTITUTION WHICH WILL INVOLVE MORE WORK IN COMMITTEES AND PROBABLY LESS PUBLICITY. ACCORDING TO ONE APRA DELEGATE, HAYA PRIVATELY REBUKED FOCEP'S LEADER GENARO LEDESMA FOR IRRESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR AND THREATENED TO SUSPEND ASSEMBLY PROCEEDINGS IF DISTURBANCES AND DIGRESSIONS CONTINUED. DECON 12-1-80. SHLAUDEMAM

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